

Summer 2004
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The Muir Woods Volunteer Newsletter

The Redwood Log

Mia's Muirly Musings . . .

By Mia Monroe

A saunter in the woods is so satisfying at this time of year. Nature's fullness and bounty is literally in the air! Ladybugs swarm each sunny day, the baby chipmunks scamper, tiger swallowtails dance, dragonflies dart and the lushness of fern, hazel bough and berry bush encompass you...even the azalea adds a fragrant note!

It is rewarding to see the very visible results of restoration work, the boardwalk, the new media but there is also the behind-the-scenes work going on, too. The Comprehensive Transportation Plan is back on track with public meetings, Big Lagoon environmental documentation work is on the bid table, funds have been located to upgrade our water/fire protection system as well as rehabilitate the historic maintenance shop (now ARAMARK's warehouse and NPS store room).

Far less progress has been made on stabilizing NPS staffing in Marin. At Muir Woods, one ranger position continues to be only approved for the most basic and temporary of hiring (Jeff is currently and capably filling it through mid-August), at the Marin Headlands one of three positions is permanently filled while the other two are vacant. Thanks to emergency hires, dedicated volunteers and the support of GGNPC staff we haven't had to reduce services, cancel programs or otherwise cut back - yet - but a closer look reveals marginal and sketchy staffing, hasty training and other supportive elements, lack of participation in bigger planning or project efforts, minimal NPS presence out in the park and little attention to special events such as the upcoming Centennial celebrations. The prognosis looks

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The VIP Corner

By Heather Boothe

Summer is here and the Volunteer Program is kicking into high gear, with new volunteers, new interns, new training programs, and more interpretive programs being offered by volunteers – not to mention the usual summer increase in visitors!

What's exciting for me this summer is that in July we'll be offering a Docent Training Class. Intended for those volunteers doing interpretation at Muir Woods, this course will offer a combination of skill-building in the art and science of interpretation as well as some nitty-gritty information about Muir Woods natural and cultural history and policies. While the course is designed for new volunteers, it would be a great refresher for experienced interpreters. You can even drop in for some sessions and skip others. Look on page 6 of the Redwood Log for the flier and tentative session schedule, then contact me if you're interested. And spread the word! This is the perfect time to get your friends involved at the Woods!

Summer is also a season of staff transitions, as some interns leave while others arrive. Jane Dukes has moved on after a nine-month internship, and is now working out of Redwood City on an environmental education floating classroom on the Bay. Matt Jatovsky has found his first paid seasonal

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We're celebrating summer and our new docent class. Save the date:
Sunday, July 25, tentatively at 5:00 pm at the maintenance picnic area...
watch for details!

Summer Featured Flora: Western Azalea
(*Rhododendron occidentale*)

By Haley Ross

It's early summer; the crowds are getting bigger and the weather is getting hotter, but a stroll through Muir Woods is as cool and peaceful as ever, especially with the spicy scent of the Western Azalea flowers filling the air. This native shrub thrives along streams in the forests of the coastal mountains of California and Oregon. Because of its pleasing aroma, the Western Azalea is known in Oregon as a "honeysuckle." The Azalea, however is a member of an entirely different family - the Ericaceae, or Heath family. Its closest relatives are the huckleberry, manzanita and madrone. Many cultivated cousins of the Western Azalea are also familiar in gardens.

The flowers range from white to rose-pink and are borne in loose clusters at the ends of the branches and perfectly presented on a backdrop of deep green ovate leaves. Five large petals with curled edges form an inviting funnel-shaped corolla that advertise five long anthers. The stamens of this flower release their pollen neatly, through a small pore, rather than simply bursting open.

Later in the summer, after the blossoms have fallen to the ground, small five-celled capsules that contain dust-like seeds will be left on the branches. Propagation of these tiny seeds involves carefully spreading the "dust" onto a flat of acidic starter soil, allowing the seeds to germinate in the green house, and later transplanting the seedlings into pots. Native soil is also added to the propagation flats and the pots, since the Azalea (and many members of this family) require a symbiotic root-associated fungus to aid it in taking up nutrients, such as phosphorus.

Take a stroll along Redwood Creek this June and experience the beautiful sight and scent of the Western Azalea, as well as the many other flowers that make up the amazing California native plant palette.



Intern Biography:
Ariana

I have been visiting Muir Woods for as long as I can remember. I grew up in San Francisco and moved to Marin County when I was twelve. I am currently going into my junior year at

Swarthmore College near Philadelphia, and recently declared myself an honors English major. I am really glad to be spending my summer back at my home in the Bay Area and at Muir Woods.

Having no certain plan for my professional future, I have been trying to gain a wide range of experiences. At Swarthmore, I act in a number of college theater productions, host a radio show, and write poetry in my spare time. I am very concerned that any job I hold be both creative in nature and compatible with sustainable living practices, which is one of the reasons I chose to work at Muir Woods.

I consider myself very fortunate to have joined the staff at the park. I have no previous experience in the park service, and, in working for Muir Woods, I am fulfilling a longtime desire to become involved in conservation. Spending a summer working at the park, a place of immeasurable magnificence, is beyond my wildest imagination. Each day as I arrive and weave closer to the park, the air clears and calms, and I feel my head do the same.

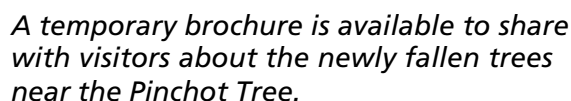


*Western
Azalea in
bloom*

Read about some of our new interns in the following pages; Ariana, Jenni, and Tracy all start in June, and Adam will start with us in early August. We're also thrilled to welcome back long-time intern/volunteer/ranger Jeff as our summer stay-in-school hire before he heads off to UC Berkeley this fall to get his teaching credential.

Finally, with the completion of the interpretive docent class, we're going to have to have a celebration! Tentative date will be Sunday, July 25 at about 5 pm at the Maintenance picnic area. Pencil in the date and look for invitations in the mail!

Please join us and invite your friends to an Interpretative Docent Training Course on Sundays, July 11, 18, and 25 at Muir Woods! Ask Heather for details.



Parks Conservancy News, June 12, 2004

by Alison Campbell

Staffing update... We have a large and capable staff this summer. Please help welcome Linda Frieders, Alice Gould, Mark Newman, Jason Godbey, Jeri Driskill (also a Muir Woods volunteer), Chris Daglow (back for his third season), Brendan Boyle, and Ramsay Williams.

Membership drive: This summer marks our third consecutive membership drive. If you or anyone you know would like to become a new member of the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, stop by the visitor center! The \$35 membership supports the park and entitles members to a host of benefits including invitations to members-only events and a 15% discount on merchandise. New members also receive a six tin set of chocolate as a thank you gift.

New titles...

Golden Gate National Recreation Area: The first two pieces of the Conservancy's new publications program are now available: the Muir Woods trail guide and the Guide to the Parks. Check out the new look and improved content!

Natural history: We have added four more California Natural History Guides: California Spring Wildflowers, Mammals of California, California Beetles, and Water in California. Other new natural history titles include Wild Lilies, Irises, and Grasses and Seaweeds of the Pacific Coast.

Cultural history: Want to know more about the history of the conservation movement and the establishment of GGNRA and Redwood National Park? Check out Edgar Wayburn's Your Land and Mine: Evolution of a Conservationist.

Childrens' books: There Once Was a Sky Full of Stars illustrates the importance of protecting dark skies. Winged Migration: The Junior Edition, a companion to the movie of the same name, describes fifteen species of international migratory birds through text and audio CD. We

also have a scrapbook kit produced by our sister organization, Eastern National, to help commemorate national park visits.

Park volunteers and Parks Conservancy members receive a 15% discount on all visitor center purchases. Proceeds benefit the park.



Intern Biography: Tracy

I was born and raised in Marin County. I have one younger sister, a cat and a dog. In my spare time, I take a plethora of photographs, hike or backpack when I can, play capture the flag, draw, write short stories, and ski. I love being outside.

During high school, I played alto saxophone in the school jazz band, worked at the San Anselmo Public library, and ran cross-country and track with the school teams. In 2003 I graduated from Sir Francis Drake High School. After a summer traveling through Europe with my track coach and other runners in the program Arete, I headed up to Washington state for college. I just completed my first year at Western Washington University, where I intend to major in Environmental Policy and Planning.

Congratulations!

Maggi Daly, interpretive volunteer for the last two years, has received her first permanent job with the National Park Service. Our loss is Coronado National Monument's gain. Be sure to congratulate her before she leaves in August!

From the World of Print

by Heather Boothe

It's been a quiet season in the world of print, for the first time in a long time. However, as I write this, plans are in place for the LAST of the wayside project signs to get installed. What you'll hopefully see before the end of summer:

- * New orientation signs, replacing the maps behind the Visitor Center and at the bus stop. The new maps will also have a small posting space and park rules.
- * New "Saving Muir Woods" exhibit on the history of the establishment of Muir Woods, installed in a new kiosk structure at the Pinchot Tree.
- * New trailhead kiosk at the Dipsea Trail, with a map as well as natural and cultural history interpretive text.
- * New map dispenser and wildlife exhibit at Bridge Two.
- * New map dispenser at Bridge 4
- * New "Naming the Redwoods" historic exhibit at the Bicentennial Tree.

We'll also be considering how to use exhibits to interpret the area around the newly fallen fir and redwoods.

Our new map and guide appears to be a great success. The visitors are using the maps to plan their trips and learn about the forest along the nature trail. However, as with any new product, there will be small changes to make when it comes time to reprint. Please put a note in my box if you have any suggestions or corrections, and when the time comes, I'll compile them all for the designers.

The web pages continue in fits and starts. If you get feedback from visitors about which pages were useful, or, more importantly, which weren't, please let me know. In the meantime, visit our web pages in the coming months to check out the education pages and safety pages which are currently in progress!

www.nps.gov/muwo/home.htm



Intern Biography: Jenni

"The majority of us lead quiet, unheralded lives as we pass through this world. There will most likely be no ticker-tape parades for us, no monuments created in our honor.

But that does not lessen our possible impact, for there are scores of people

waiting for someone just like us to come along; people who will appreciate our compassion, our unique talents. Someone who will live a happier life merely because we took the time to share what we had to give."

-Leo Buscaglia

Hi! My name is Jenni and I am thrilled to be a summer intern at Muir Woods. I really enjoy this quote and feel like it illustrates my role as an environmental educator to help others appreciate outdoors as much as I do. What better place to have the opportunity to do this than at Muir Woods.

My love for the outdoors has always been a constant in my life. My father, having all girls, decided that I would be his tomboy. Against my mother's wishes, he would pack me up on the back of his bike at the ripe old age of three months to enjoy a ride in the park. Often we would stop to enjoy the scenery while he propped my top heavy head up against the bicycle seat. Rides in the park, hiking, camping, swimming, and fishing have always been a part of my childhood and influence who I am today.

Two weeks ago I received my bachelors of Science in Parks and Natural Resources. It is my goal to gain valuable job experience working at Muir Woods and after working my first weekend here I am confident that this will happen. I am not sure where I would like to work after my internship is completed, but I do know I have a lot of passion for conservation and preservation. I hope that I can pass on my enthusiasm for the outdoors to the public through environmental interpretation.

Park Updates

By Heather Boothe

Muir Woods National Monument and Golden Gate National Recreation Area are once again proving that in both nature and politics, the only constant is change. Here are just a few of the recent events and issues in the park:

Fire!

On Sunday, May 9, approximately 12 acres of eucalyptus trees and chaparral burned on NPS land near Tam Valley, just east of the junction of Highway 1 and Panoramic Highway. Named the "Tam Valley Fire," this is the largest wildfire on GGNRA land since the park was established. Occurring before the official start of fire season, fire fighters encountered unseasonably dry material, but low winds and some fuel moisture helped them to quickly control the fire. Learn more about it at www.nps.gov/goga/fire

Trees Fall!

On Monday, May 10, the fir tree that had begun to fall on April 2 (threatening the safety of those on the Ocean View Trail and the Main Trail), was cut down by a Yosemite tree crew. When it fell, it began a chain reaction, causing several other trees to fall. This new area of debris is providing good old growth forest habitat for all sorts of animals. We'll be considering developing interpretive signage for the area this summer. In the meantime, check out the wall folder in the intern office for information and visitor handouts.

Politics and the Parks!

You may have been hearing a lot about National Parks and their budgets in the news, and it's very likely that visitors will ask you about this issue this summer. While we as federal employees may not venture opinions on policies or politicians, we can state the facts. Muir Woods' and Golden Gate's budgets have been essentially stagnant for several years, and costs for personnel, equipment, and supplies have risen. If you'd

like to discuss this further, please feel free to ask any park staff about it. Or you can learn more yourself by looking at any park's web site under "facts" to learn the budget for the last several years at www.nps.gov

Safety and Security in the Parks

The Parks continue their commitment to safety this year, and that means for everyone – NPS staff, partners, volunteers, and visitors. It means our law enforcement rangers are stretched thin to cover homeland security, and all of us need to keep an eye out for safety issues in the park – from vehicles parking in fire lanes in the parking lot to broken fence rails and hazardous trees in the woods. Please: never enter an area you think is unsafe, or confront a person if you feel they would not be cooperative. Bring safety issues to the attention of either interp or law enforcement rangers, and we will take the next step.

Become a Volunteer at Muir Woods Docent Training Class

**Three Sundays, 9-4:30
July 11, 18, and 25, 2004**

Join our team of forest wanderers!
Interpretive Volunteers help visitors
to make intellectual and emotional
connections to our special redwood
treasure. Do you want to help?

Attend the evening program
at The Redwoods in Mill
Valley at 7:30 p.m. on June
17, 2004 to learn more!



To apply for the class or for
more information, contact
Heather at 415-388-2596 or
heather.boothe@nps.gov

